



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

NEWS RELEASE

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Baucus Fights to Reverse Cuts to Medicaid Funding

Senator Sends Letter with the Support of 78 Colleagues to Protect Medicaid Funding

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) U.S. Senator Max Baucus today sent a letter to the Senate Budget Committee chairman and ranking member urging against any Medicaid funding cuts in the final version of the budget resolution.

Currently, the House-passed budget resolution includes approximately \$92 billion in Medicaid cuts, while the Senate-passed resolution and the Administration budget does not cut Medicaid funding.

"It is more important than ever to ensure that we can provide assistance to our most vulnerable populations, especially given the slowing economy and tough fiscal situation our states are facing," Baucus said. "I'm disturbed by the House budget that ignores the health care needs of millions of low income Americans and I'm going to keep up a steady drumbeat to ensure that Medicaid funding levels are restored in the final budget resolution."

Baucus was joined by Finance Committee Chairman Charles Grassley and a group of 77 bipartisan Senators in sending the Medicaid letter to Sens. Don Nickles (R-Okla.) and Kent Conrad (D-N.D.).

"As the states are forced to find ways to balance their budgets, too often funding is being taken from important social programs such as Medicaid. If further cuts are made at the federal level as well, the results could be devastating. It's up to us in Congress to provide the states with the assistance they need and help take some of the burden off of their shoulders so they can properly fund this important program," Baucus added.

-- Letter Attached --

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 27, 2003

The Honorable Don Nickles
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kent Conrad
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Nickles and Senator Conrad:

Medicaid provides essential health coverage to 47 million low-income children, working families, seniors, and people with disabilities. This critical safety net program also contributes significantly to state economies by stimulating employment and business activity.

As you know, the House-passed budget resolution includes a reconciliation instruction requiring an estimated \$92 billion in cuts to Medicaid funding over ten years. Neither the Senate budget resolution nor the Administration budget includes any such cuts to Medicaid.

States are currently facing the most severe budget crisis since World War II and nearly every state has proposed or enacted cuts to its Medicaid program. Any reduction in federal Medicaid funding would place millions of vulnerable Americans now receiving Medicaid in jeopardy of losing their health coverage. Federal funding reductions would force states to implement even deeper cuts by restricting eligibility, eliminating or reducing critical health benefits, and severely cutting or freezing provider reimbursement rates. As a result, Medicaid funding cuts would add millions more to the ranks of the uninsured.

We, the undersigned Senators, write to express our strong opposition to the inclusion of any Medicaid cuts in the final budget resolution. Cutting federal Medicaid funding would add millions more to the growing ranks of 41 million uninsured Americans, even as Medicaid is most needed during an economic downturn.

The Senate has recently voted overwhelmingly to support state fiscal relief efforts to keep states from having to cut eligibility or further reduce provider payments under their Medicaid programs. The size and scope of any relief efforts will be considered by the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate as a whole.

We are calling on you, as Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Budget Committee, to reject the inclusion of any Medicaid cuts as part of the final budget resolution.

Sincerely,

Chuck Grassley Max Baucus
Charles E. Grassley Max Baucus
Chairman Ranking Member

Orin Hatch Jay Byrnes

Olympia Snowe

Tom Vascule

C.H. Roth John Breaux

Susan Collins Ed Cravens

Jim Bunning

Mike Enzi

George V. Voinovich

Jim Jeffords

Hal Clint

Paul Sarbanes

Kebbie Taberall

Tom Amodeo

Peter Don

Jim Taheri

Pat Roberts

Paul Coburn

Robert F. Bennett

Tom F. Lundy

Blanche L. Lincoln

Jack Reed

Bill Nelson

Samuel H. Haskin

Ken Wyden

Wm D. Jennings

Dick Durbin

Mark Pryor

Harry Keel

Tom Harkin

Conrad

Ed Hanning

or Tiden

Patricia Leahy

N Co

Allen Jett

John
Hobbs

Robert Baker

Cal L.
Cyril D M

Pet G Fitzgerald

Laura Alexander

Mike Dewine

James Austin Chas. Sill

John Cargy John Cargy

E. Benjamin Jones Maria Cantwell

Robert A. Nicholas Byron L. Soper

Frank R. Lenth John Edwards

Jim John Robert C. Byrd

John Warner L. L. Chiles

Bartholomew Campbell Art Bond

John McLan John Chiles

Patty Murray

Mark Dayton

Rick Leger

Craig Thomas

Jay Byrnes Antichan

Sally Charliss

Sam Brownback

Al Franken

Eric Boehl

Jeff Hollins

George Allen

Harry Reid

Chuck Hagel